I'll show you your existence

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I'll show you your existence

by ssaseaprince

Summary

After the fall, Will awakes without his memory. While they both heal physically, Will's memory refuses to come back. Hannibal is forced to take drastic measures, and decides to bring Will to all the important places of his life in hopes of bringing it back. They start in Louisiana, going through Will's childhood, before they go to Baltimore, Europe, and end their journey at the cliff where they killed Dolarhyde together.

Notes

This is my first try at writing a long fic, so hopefully you guys like it! I'm planning on posting a new chapter at least once a week, and I will update the tags as needed with each chapter <3

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The first thing registered during his slow descent into consciousness was the cold. It was bone deep, penetrating through his skin and muscle, seeping into his soul. It was the kind of cold that left you unable to shiver, the kind that stained your limbs black and rotted them off. It was the kind of cold that killed you. The next thing he registered was the heavy pain of water in his lungs, choking him. There was a fleeting feeling of hands on his chest, pushing the water up through his throat and into his mouth. He coughed, the black sea water stinging his mouth as it came up. He was promptly turned on his side, and he coughed and gagged for what seemed like eternity until his lungs felt clear and he could take big, gasping breaths. There is a voice in the background, ragged and hoarse, comforting him through it, though he can't make out the words. He's turned back onto his back, and two large hands clasp his face. It's dark, but he can make out the face of a man staring at him. They stare at each for a moment, before the man speaks.

"We've got to go. Chiyoh is waiting for us." The words vibrate around his skull, the name is meaningless and empty. He doesn't move, blinking slowly up at the man leaning over him. "They'll find us here, we need to leave. Trust me, Will. Come." The man speaks again. Will. That must be him, the name pulls at strings of familiarity. It feels like him. The man doesn't give up his own name though, and one doesn't come to mind when Will looks at him.

Next thing he knows, Will is limping through the forest, arm slung over the stranger's shoulder. He doesn't know this man, he doesn't know who *they* is, and he doesn't know who they're running from. But a sense of urgency fills him, and he knows he must go with this man. He's trusting his instincts. They crash through the woods, both obviously injured and struggling. The walk seems to take forever, and with every step Will discovers another thing that hurts. His cheek throbs, making his whole skull pulse. There doesn't seem to be a single part of him that doesn't ache, and he's dripping wet to top it all off. The man he's clinging to is wet as well, and walking with a heavy limp. They both smell of salt.

After what seems like a lifetime, they emerge from the trees, the moonlight shining down on them as they approach a road. The walk had been silent, save for their heavy breaths and footfalls, but the man speaks now. "Chiyoh will find us, she knows to be looking." Will doesn't bother responding, his cheek hurts too much to move his mouth anyways. He finds some strange comfort in the words, even if he doesn't know what they mean. His feet hurt, and his legs are weak, threatening to give out from underneath him. The man grips him tighter, recognizing his struggle. "I know, I know. But you can't sit down, I won't be able to get you back up. Hold onto me, she'll be here soon." Will grits his teeth and does as he's told, holding tighter to the stranger. Finally, they see headlights. The stranger seems to stand taller, tensing as if to prepare for attack. He only relaxes once a van pulls over next to them and a young woman gets out. After approaching them she reaches out and embraces the man. He accepts her affection, returning it with the hand not holding onto Will. "You're alive." She says.

"Yes," the man responds, "both of us." And with that she pulls back, her dark eyes piercing through the night, going over Will's face with mild interest and apprehension. She nods,

walking back to the van and opening up the back. “Come, they won’t see you.” The van only has windows in front, meaning anything in the back is hidden from view. “Smart girl” the man says, a slight laugh in his voice. He leads Will into the van, and they both slide into the back. There's blankets, two pairs of clothes and a large first aid kit already occupying the van. The man shuts the back doors, and then grabs the kit. There is a screen between the front of the van and the back, so they couldn’t see the woman in the front, but Will feels the van start, pulling off the side of the road and beginning to drive. The man begins pulling things out of the first aid kit, gauze, needles, stitching thread, alcohol wipes. He moves closer to Will, gesturing to his face.

“I need to clean and stitch your cheek, you’re still bleeding, and I am concerned about infection and how deep the wound is.” His words seem to make the pain flare brighter, and tears gather in Will’s eyes. He nods, and the man looks mildly relieved. “This is going to be painful, but I’m afraid I don't have any anesthetic on hand.” Will just nods again, turning his head so his cheek is facing the man. The stranger begins stitching, talking while he works.

“It’s good not to speak, I can see bone. The knife cut through your gums, speaking may irritate it. Hopefully it will only be for a week, give or take, before you’ll feel well enough to speak. In the meantime, we’ll find other means for you to communicate.” Will squeezes his eyes shut as the man finishes, opening them when he feels the hands retreat. The stranger gathers new supplies from the kit, then he pulls off his shirt, revealing a bullet wound in his abdomen. The sight is like a punch in the gut for Will, though he can't tell why he cares so much. His concern must be visible through his expression, because the man is quick to reassure him. ‘I’ll be fine. The Dragon wasn’t looking to kill me, he missed all major organs deliberately.” He speaks with almost clinical detachment, but Will can hear the slight stutter in his words. He can see how his hands shake ever so slightly as he sews up his own wound. Will doesn’t know who this “Dragon” is but he can’t help but feel grateful to him for not fatally injuring the man with the shot.

The man looks up at Will when he’s done with his front, his expression apprehensive.

“I can’t reach around to do the exit wound in my back, I’m going to need you to do it.” Will feels his breath stutter, and he hesitates before taking the supplies from the man. He speaks as he turns, exposing his back. “It doesn’t need to be anything elaborate, you just need to get the wound closed. You’ll do fine, I’m aware you know how to do simple stitching.”

Not that I remember Will thinks. He takes a shaky breath, and leans closer to the man to begin. He pauses before beginning, his heart racing. The man has a large scar on his back, the twisted intricate lines exposing itself as a brand. Will doesn’t know why the scar feels significant, but he feels almost hypnotized as he reaches out and traces it with his finger. The man shivers and his breathing speeds up. They stay like that for a minute, Will is fascinated with the knot of scar tissue on this stranger's back. Eventually the man breaks the silence. “Will, it is important you stitch the wound.” The spell is broken and Will is brought back to himself. He clears his throat and begins stitching. He does his best to make the stitches clean and straight, though he feels mildly disappointed when it comes out rudimentary at best. He pulls away when done, putting the supplies with the rest of the used stuff. The man grabs the extra clothes and hands some to Will. “We need to change, we’re more susceptible to hypothermia staying in these wet clothes.” Will nods and takes them, inspecting the plain

long sleeve shirt, sweatpants and thick socks. They turn away from each other as they change, giving each other privacy. Once changed, they both end up leaning against the side of the van, sitting side by side. Will can feel the heat slowly returning to his body, his limbs becoming heavy with exhaustion. He holds back a yawn, face scrunching up in pain as it pulls on his cheek. “You can sleep,” the man says. “I will wake you when we need to move.” Will closes his eyes at that, and slowly lays his head on the other man's shoulder. He doesn’t know why, but he craves the proximity. It feels right. The man freezes, waiting with baited breath as Will finds himself falling asleep. Right before the darkness pulls him back under, he feels the man rest his head atop of Wills.

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Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Will” the accented voice echoed through his skull, pulling him away from the darkness. He rubbed his eyes and began to yawn, before the pain reminded him of his wounded cheek and sprung tears into his eyes. As he slowly woke up, reality set it. *I didn’t dream,* he thought. That felt significant for some reason. Did he have problems with dreams? The reality of how deep his memory loss hit him hard. *Who am I?* His fear must've been visible, because he felt a large, warm hand shake his shoulder softly.

“Will,” the voice repeated. He looked up, locking eyes with the man from before. “You’re alright. We’re alright.”

He takes a shaky breath, finding comfort in the reassurances, even though he was *definitely* not alright. His breathing mellowed out, and the man gave him a small smile. “We’re here.” *Where?* Will wanted to ask, but he didn’t want to risk hurting his mouth more. The man seemed to read the question on his face though, “Come, you’ll see.” And with that, they both slowly climbed out of the van, careful of their injuries and broken bodies. When he emerged from the vehicle, Will was brought face to face with a warm little cabin, nestled in the rainforest. He took a deep breath, the smell of pine and the fresh air assaulting his senses. He couldn’t help the smile that made its way to his face. After minutes of staring at his surroundings, he remembered he was not alone. The girl, Chiyoh, he guessed, was busy bringing in the blankets and the first aid kit into the house. The man though, he was looking at Will in wonder. Like one would look at the person they love. And when Will turned to look back at him, the man flushed, looking away and clearing his throat. “This is one of my safehouses, we are in Washington State now.” He glanced up, seeming embarrassed at being caught staring. It was… endearing.

“I thought of you when I bought it,” his voice was quieter. “We’ll stay here until I can make further travel arrangements. The FBI is expecting us to run, as of now, traveling would be riskier than staying in the states.” Will wasn’t sure how to respond, so he just nodded.

Chiyoh approached the man, barely sparring Will a glance. “You should have everything you need here.” Her voice was soft but strong, and Will could hear a mild accent permeate her words as well. The man hugged her, “We won’t call on you again. You are free, Chiyoh. My girl, we appreciate everything you’ve done for us.” Chiyoh hugged him back tightly before letting him go. They spoke a few more words in hushed voices that Will missed, he was distracted by the flash of hot, sickening jealousy that seemed to overwhelm him briefly at the words “my girl.” he didn’t know why the words made him so jealous, but his reaction felt like a clue as the nature of his relationship with the other man. *Maybe we’re lovers* , he wonders. The label feels right, but also feels lacking somehow.

He’s brought out of his thoughts when Chiyoh approaches him. She holds out her hand, and he hesitates before shaking it. “You belong with each other, I see that now. Take care of him.” She squeezes his hand tightly, her piercing eyes staring into his. He gives a small nod, feeling

overwhelmed by her words. Her hand releases his, and she makes her way back to the van. The van starts and pulls away, disappearing down the road. She does not look back.

Will turns back to the man, who gestures for him to follow him into the house. “Come.”

The house is warmly lit with a cozy interior. Warm blankets folded in the corner and thrown over the back of a soft looking couch, a modest kitchen connected to the living room. The house appeared to be one level, with a hallway leading down to four rooms with closed doors. The man leads Will down the hallway, opening three of the four doors and explaining where everything is. Two of the rooms are bedrooms, and one is a bathroom. “Our rooms have their own bathroom, this is the guest one.” The third room's door stays firmly shut, and Will reaches out and rests his hand on the doorknob. “Will.” The man's voice is sharp, making Will flinch and let go of the handle. “There is nowhere in this house you are not permitted, But I feel we must heal our current injuries before trying to tackle the wounds of the past.” He pauses. “That was intended to be her room.” Whatever *her* the man was referring to was lost to Will, but a resounding sadness settled in his soul. He looked to the side of the man, eye contact seemed overwhelming at the moment. The man continued. “Each bathroom has a shower, and the closet and dresser have clothes that should fit you. I am going to go clean up, I would encourage you to do the same. Afterwards, we will find some writing materials for you to communicate with.” And with that the man disappears into his room.

Will follows his advice, his skin smells of salt and the sea, and his hair is stiff from the dirty water. The room is modest, but not too small. There is a small closet with a sliding door, and the bathroom across from the bed. The bathroom is clean and a nice size, stocked with a toothbrush and toothpaste. He finds shampoo, conditioner and body wash already in the shower, and towels hung up, ready to use. He gets in the shower, and the warm water is soothing on his aching body. The shampoo and conditioner smell expensive, the bottles proclaiming that they are sandalwood, tea tree, and sweet mandarin scented.

Once he’s done, he steps out of the shower, wrapping a towel around his waist and using one to dry his curls. Wandering into the bedroom, he finds the closet stocked with plenty of clothes, mostly consisting of plain long sleeve shirts and nice jeans. He finds a couple suits, t-shirts, a jacket, and a few pairs of shorts. Two pairs of nice work boots and a pair of dress shoes sit on the closet floor. The small dresser is next to the closet, holding undershirts, boxers and socks. He tries not to think of the implications that come with the fact that everything is his size, and he throws on a pair of jeans, a long sleeve brown shirt, and some black socks. Will lingers at the door of his room, hand hovering over the handle as he tries to work up the courage to come out and face the stranger. He takes a deep breath, and with shaking hands opens the door, walking out to the kitchen. The man is dressed in similar clothes to Will, though his long sleeve shirt is a deep wine red. He’s mixing something in a metal bowl with a whisk, and the stovetop is on, a pan resting on the surface. Will approaches and finds a whiteboard and black erasable marker at the island. He sits in the chair in front of it, and grasps the marker in his hand. The man turns briefly, before going back to his cooking. He pours the yellow mixture out into the pan and uses a spatula to push it around as he talks. “You may write as you please. It is not ideal, but until you can speak without too much pain, it will have to do.” *I don’t know what to say* , Will thinks. Nodding at everything is easier then trying to find appropriate words. He had debated during his shower whether or not he

should tell the man he has no memory, and had come to the conclusion that it would be better to do it now, as the man was bound to find out eventually. He inspected the marker, trying to come up with the right words. A plate of scrambled eggs came into his view, salt and pepper shakers in front of them, and a glass of water beside them. The man tapped the edge of the plate, “You must eat to regain your energy.” He then pulled out the chair next to Will and sat, but maintained a respectful distance. Will used eating as an excuse to put off communicating longer, going through his eggs slowly. His mouth hurt to open at all, but the eggs and water were soothing on his throat. They ate in silence, and Will couldn’t help but notice how formal the man seemed, even eating scrambled eggs in jeans and a plain shirt.

They finished eating at about the same time, despite Will’s best efforts to eat slowly, making him wonder if the man noticed and purposefully kept pace so he wouldn't have to eat alone. He took a final sip of his water before uncapping the marker. He steeled himself, and before he lost his nerve wrote out one, messy, hard to read sentence that he shoved over in front of the man.

“Who are you?”

Chapter End Notes

So we're finally getting somewhere!! The next chapter will be Hannibal reacting to Will's memory loss. I know these chapters are short, but this is my first time writing a fic with multiple chapters, and keeping them short helps me stay more consistent <3

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Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will wouldn't have been surprised if the world had actually stopped moving after that. The man froze, and Will didn't even think he was breathing. His face was eerily blank as he stared at the whiteboard. Will nervously fidgeted with the marker as he watched the man, he was regretting his choice in telling the man, and was genuinely concerned he was about to witness a heart attack. The man stayed frozen like that for what felt like ages, but was more like five minutes according to the clock above the stove. Will cleared his throat finally, and that seemed to pull the man out of his shock. He blinked rapidly, eyes darting between Will and the whiteboard. Picking up his napkin, he dabbed his mouth clean and then picked up his dishes, taking them to the sink and rinsing them before putting them in the dishwasher. Will stayed quiet this whole time, waiting for the man to speak. He didn't though. After cleaning up after himself, the man walked down the hall to his room and shut the door. Will was stunned, and unsure of what to do. Tears stung his eyes, dripping down his face before he could stop them. Robotically he followed the man's lead, cleaning up his dishes and then making his way to his room. He laid on his bed for an unknown amount of time, he couldn't even bring himself to pull back the sheets to lay under. He stares at the ceiling until his eyes blur, the smooth white paint the last thing he remembers.

When he opens his eyes again, it is early morning. He's sore, his body cramped from laying in the same position for so long. The clock on his bedside table read **5:57am** , and he could hear birds singing through his window, the sun just barely beginning to appear. Groaning, he forces himself to get up and start the day. He changed into a nearly identical outfit to the one yesterday, and brushed his teeth. His hair was a mess, the curls poking out in all different directions. He spends five minutes attempting to tame it before giving up, making due with getting it to stop pointing towards the ceiling. Hesitantly, he leaves his room and makes his way to the kitchen. The clock now read **6:57am** , a fact that leaves him reeling. He hadn't spent that much time getting ready, had he? It is incredibly concerning, he knew the memory loss probably meant he was suffering from some kind of brain damage, and to add losing time or lack of awareness and it just made it seem worse. There is no sign of the man in their shared living space, but Will tries not to be concerned. *It's still early* , he tries to reassure himself. *I'm sure he'll be up eventually* . He finds cereal in the closet and milk in the fridge, both brands that looked high end and unfamiliar. He eats slowly, trying to stop himself from glancing at the man's door every thirty seconds. He dragged the meal out as much as he could, hoping the man would come out and interrupt him.

Breakfast was quiet and lonely, the man never making an appearance. After he's done eating, Will decides to explore the house, starting with the kitchen. It was very well stocked, plenty of perishables in the pantry, but fresh fruit on the counter and nice vegetables in the fridge. There are all the typical staples, milk, bread, butter, flour, sugar, as well as things he doesn't recognize mixed in. Many of the labels weren't in English, and the ones that were had names he doesn't know. He moves to the living area, surveying the spacious and warm room. There was a fireplace with a flat screen TV hung above it, a coffee table in the center of the room

and a deep brown sectional across from it, with a hamper full of cozy folded blankets next to that. Though the room was bare, it was clean and free of dust, but it didn't appear to have been lived in anytime recently. There wasn't much to see, and the man still has yet to make an entrance, so Will trudges back down the hallway. This time he stops in front of the man's door, and gets as far as raising his fist to knock before he loses his nerve and dejectedly lowers his hand. He remembers the room with the unopened door, and decides now is as good a time as any to look in it. The man had spoken of it as if it was significant to him, and would be to Will as well. *Maybe I'll remember something* Will hopes. And with that thought, he slowly turns the knob and enters the room. The room clearly belonged to someone, most likely a young girl, and Will remembers what the man had said yesterday. That the room belongs to *her.* It was painted a light purple, so light it was almost white. There was a bed with a white bed frame, flowers carved into the headboard. The comforter was the same light purple, with dark green accents that remind Will of the forest. A large but tasteful vanity was pressed up against one of the walls, empty but ready for use.

The room doesn't bring back any memories, but when he opens the closet and is faced with the rack full of clothes a teen girl would love, he is overwhelmed with a choking, heartbreaking sadness. The closet held jeans, cardigans, tshirt and coats, with one hanger dedicated to all different kinds of scarves. Seeing the scarves brings something out in him he couldn't explain, and he slammed the closet door closed, stumbling out of the room..

He ended up back in his room, his back against the door and slid down to sit on the floor. It all seems to hit him at once, his memory loss, the fact that he is apparently *on the run,* though he doesn't know why. His face throbs, and he thinks about the fact that it will leave a huge, ugly scar on his face. He doesn't even remember what he looked like pre-injury. He doesn't know his last name, his parents' names, or where he was born. He doesn't know if he's married or if he has children, he has nothing. Nothing but the stranger currently locked in the other room. He wipes his face with his sleeve, trying to gain back his composure. *He'll come see me eventually. He has to. I can be patient.*

And he is patient, but by the end of the third day his concern overcomes his hesitancy to bother the man. Will has left him alone, reassuring himself that the stranger just needs time to collect himself. He has spent his time watching cheesy soap operas, the only thing on the limited channels the TV has. He finds stacks of wood outside, ready to be chopped for firewood. So he chops firewood until he almost passes out, wounds aching and hands numb. There was a desk in his room he'd failed to notice at first, full of fishing hooks and feathers, a large magnifying glass on top. Tying flies was second nature to him, and he spent hours making eye-catching, brightly coloured flies, another piece added to the puzzle that was his identity. *I'm a fisherman.*

Each morning he comes out ready to face the man, and each morning he is disappointed. The door at the end of the hall remains firmly shut, and there is never any sign that the man came out to the kitchen when Will wasn't there. Going that long without food was already hard on your body, but the man was injured on top of that. The concern was enough that Will gives in to his impulses and knocks on the man's door, reaching out first. He doesn't bother with the whiteboard, he can speak softly as of now.

There was no answer, so he knocked again. And again. At this point he is worried he'll walk in on the man dead on the floor, so he gives up knocking and just opens the door. It wasn't locked like he thought it would be, which was a relief that he wouldn't have to pick the lock. Entering the room, he can see the stranger curled up in the bed, blankets pulled all the way up to his chin. Walking closer, he is relieved to see the movement of the man's breathing underneath in the bed. Making his way around the bed, he can finally see the man's face. He is pale and staring at the wall past Will, eyes dead and flat. He doesn't move or even blink, showing no acknowledgement that he sees Will.

"Hey," was the first thing Will said. The man continued to show no reaction, so he continued. "Listen.. You're making me worried. It's been days." His voice is scratchy and hoarse, but he knows it's loud enough the man should be able to hear it. The man gives a slow blink, face still blank and still staring. Frustrated, Will reaches out and shakes the man's shoulder. It's enough, and the man springs into action, and faster than Will can register, his arm is grabbed and he's pinned to the floor. The man holds his wrists above his head, his eyes bright and his face drawn up in a snarl. He looks like the complete opposite of the man Will just walked in on, and Will feels a flash of fear.

"Hey, Hey!" He yells. "I'm sorry!" The adrenaline coursing through him makes raising his voice easier, the pain in his mouth forgotten. The man doesn't appear to register the words, hands digging even harder into Will's wrists. Will takes a shaky breath and stops struggling, lowering his voice and doing his best to calm his tone. "It's Will, it's okay. It's just me.." That seems to do it, and the man blinks, his grip loosening. His face falls, the fire in his eyes fading. "Will?" His voice is soft and hesitant. "Yeah, hey" Will responds, giving a small smile despite his cheek. He pulls his hands free, and slowly brings one to the man's face. The man closes his eyes at the contact of Will's hand with his cheek, tears falling down his face. "Will," he repeats, his arms collapsing. Their bodies are pressed together, the man clutching Will tightly as he sobs. "Shhh, shh, you're okay. We're okay." He runs his hands through the man's hair as he finds himself comforting them both.

They stay like that for a while as the man gradually calms down. Eventually he pulls away, sitting back on the floor and resting against the bed. He offers a hand and helps Will sit up too, both of them facing each other. Will leans against the wall and watches as the man dabs his nose with his sleeve, a brief look of disgust flashes on his face at the act. He clears his throat and speaks. "Forgive me. That was.. uncalled for. And fairly embarrassing."

"It's fine," He speaks slowly, careful about his words. "I wouldn't have come in like that without asking, but it's been three days. I've been worried about you." "Three days?" the man questions, seemingly shocked at the news. Will nods, letting the man process the situation. He notices he's wearing the same clothes he last saw him in, and he feels his heart break a little. "I apologize," the man responds. "Time got away from me." There is obviously more to it than that, but Will resists the urge to pry. He rubs his bruised wrists as the man becomes aware of the position they are in, his posture stiffening as he stands up. Will gets up at the same time, and the man sways. Will catches him before he can hit the floor again, not letting go until he is sure the man is steady. Once they're both firmly on their feet, Will says, as kindly as he can. "How about you go shower, and I'll make us some food?" The man flushes, appearing embarrassed at the situation. "Yes, of course. Thank you." Will nods, turning to leave the room. When he reaches the door he looks back to address the man who has made

his way to the bathroom door. “You’ll be out when you’re done.. Right?” He receives a stoic nod in return. He takes one more look at the man, using what small amount of courage he has to blurt out to the man his question. “What’s your name?”

The man looks up, his cinnamon eyes locking with Will’s blue ones. “Hannibal.” The name affects Will in a way he doesn’t expect. The name feels the same as his own. “Hannibal,” he repeats, nodding. With that, he takes his leave, leaving Hannibal’s room. Once he closes the door, he leans back against it, suddenly feeling out of breath. He squeezes his eyes shut and counts to ten, taking deep breaths. “Hannibal.” He whispers, and the name calms him even more. He may not remember how they met, or who exactly this man is, but when saying that name, he knows everything will be okay. And for the first time since he woke up laying in the sand next to the ocean, he doesn’t feel alone, and he doesn’t feel scared. He lifts his bruised wrists to his mouth, his lips featherlight against the skin.

Chapter End Notes

So this chapter is definitely OOC, but I will explain in the next few chapters what exactly Hannibal was going through, so I promise it makes sense!

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Chapter Notes

Hey guys! Sorry this chapter took me so long to get out, I haven't been feeling very good. I also had to repost this chapter due to some technical difficulties. I think it should all be good now though! Thank you for reading <3

By the time Hannibal was finished showering and making himself presentable, Will had cooked the biggest breakfast spread he could, taking into consideration the fact that Hannibal hadn't eaten for days. He's wary, and afraid that one wrong move would send the man back into his self imposed isolation. They had enough food and supplies for a few more days, but they would run out eventually, and Will didn't know his way around wherever they were located. He knows his facial scar would make him more recognizable to anyone looking, possibly alerting whoever they were running from of their location. As hard as he tried, Will still couldn't remember anything. It was a terrifying feeling, and there were times he wanted to scream, collapsing into himself. He's scared, and Hannibal is the only person he can turn to for answers right now.

He's pulled out of his thoughts when Hannibal makes his way into the kitchen. He's dressed in a long sleeve charcoal gray sweater and some black pants and socks. It's a simple outfit, but Will can't help but the wave of appreciation that floods him, his eyes taking the man in. Hannibal returns his gaze, his eyes doing their own once over of Will, emotion shining through his eyes.

Will clears his throat, cheeks burning. "I, um, I made breakfast. You should eat." He sits down at the table and gestures the other man over. Hannibal looks over the spread, eggs, pancakes, sausage, and biscuits. He makes his way slowly over to the table, taking the chair in front of the empty plate Will had set out. "Thank you, Will." He says in a hushed voice, seemingly hesitant to speak. "You're welcome," Will replies. The man is pale, and his weakness is apparent. He walks slowly, and Will is reminded of his injuries. *Infection* , it's a worry. Will reminds himself to check on the man's wounds later, once he had some nutrients in him.

They fill their plates and eat in silence, the air around them is heavy with emotion and unspoken words. *This isn't how we're supposed to be* . The thought grabs hold of Will and won't let go the whole time they are eating. Eventually the plates are empty, and there's nowhere to run to avoid the conversation that they both know must be had. The man looks noticeably better already, colour is returning back to his cheeks and he seems more stable in his movements. Hannibal dabs his mouth with the napkin, clearly doing his best to put off speaking. He speaks after another minute of silence. "Let us clear our plates and the table, then we may speak in the living room." "Alright," Will answers, clinging to the chance to put off the conversation for as long as possible.

The dishes are cleared and washed, and both men reluctantly make their way to the living room, Will sitting on the couch and Hannibal sitting across from him on the loveseat, as he begins talking.

“Memory loss can be a side effect of many different things, both psychological and physical. Without the opportunity to do a brain scan, we can not know for sure.” His face and voice are cold, eyes refusing to make contact with Will’s. “I suspect it may be a combination of both. I believe you sustained a concussion during our fall, and I also suspect the trauma of the event has caused a memory block as well.”

“Trauma?” Will asks. “We killed a man together.” Hannibal is blunt about it, not leaving any room for questioning. “I tore out his throat, and you gutted him.” That seems to bring some emotion from the man, his eyes flashing. The words should be shocking, but they aren't. Even though he may not remember, the words feel true. Will nods, a lump in his throat. “We killed a man,” He repeats Hannibal’s words. He sits with the knowledge for a minute, and he can’t tell how it makes him feel. “It was life changing.” It’s not a question, but a statement. Hannibal's stoic expression seems to crumble, ever so slightly, his grief peaking through. “It was beautiful.” The words are choked out. Will watches the man in fascination, and he begins to get overwhelmed himself, the other's emotions leaching through the air and attaching themselves onto Will. He swallows them back, keeping his composure. “That is why we are on the run?”

“That is part of the reason. But there is much more to the story than that.”

“Tell it to me then?”

“There is only so much that can be told through words,” Hannibal answers. “So much of it you can only understand if you were there.” Will runs his fingers through his hair in frustration. “You can’t leave me in the dark. You’re all I have right now, and I have a right to know.” Hannibal’s lip curls up in a snarl, anger fighting with his grief. “You do not need to know everything, you could not possibly understand it all.” “I couldn't possibly understand it all? That’s not fair to me. It was my life too!” They aren’t shouting at each other, but they might as well be. Hannibal's emotions are volatile, his words full of feeling. “That man is gone. My Will,” his voice cracks. “My Will cannot exist without his mind.” Will softens at that, his anger evaporating. He stands up and walks over to Hannibal, then drops to knees in front of the man. Slowly, he reaches up, cradling the Hannibal's face in his hands. “You are grieving someone who is still alive, Hannibal. I’m still here, and I’m still Will. We can fight to get my memories back, okay? I will fight for it.” he wipes away a tear with his thumb. “You’ve gotta fight with me though.”

Hannibal melts at Will's touch, and he clutches onto Will’s hands, giving a shaky nod. “I’m sorry. After all we’ve been through, I can’t bare to lose you now. I could not survive it, I would not want to survive it.” “Hey, hey,” Will is quick to reassure him. ”I’m not dead, Hannibal." He repeats. "I may not remember now, but it doesn’t mean I never will. I am the same person, I have all the same potential.”

Will takes one of Hannibal's hands in his, and he brings their entwined hands to his chest. His pulse is racing, the strong beats reverberating through his chest. Will presses their hands

roughly against his heart, letting the beats flow through their flesh. “My Will.” It is whispered, but the words seem to take up all the space in the room. “Yours.”

Will doesn’t know how long they stay like that, but he gets up eventually, a grimace on his face as his injured body protests. He sits next to Hannibal, their sides pressed together and each of them still grasping one of the others hands. “I need to know what we’re up against, Hannibal. I can’t help keep us safe if I don’t know what’s going on.” Hannibal sighs, nodding. “Alright.”

Hannibal lets go of Will’s hand and stands up, “I will go make us some coffee to drink as we talk.” Will doesn’t follow him, figuring that the man needs a moment to compose himself. Hannibal doesn’t seem like the type of man to lose his composure often, and Will feels a mild sense of accomplishment at the thought that he is the reason such a put together man is brought to tears.

He waits patiently as Hannibal makes their coffee, the warm, familiar smell permitting the air. When Hannibal returns, he looks a lot better. The only indication that he has been crying were his slightly red eyes. He hands Will a steaming cup, the comforting heat of it tingling his skin. “Thank you.” He gives the man a small smile when he sits back down next to him. “Now,” Hannibal starts, getting right into it. “How much do you wish to know at the moment? Only what is relevant to now?” “I want to know as much about myself, and our relationship, as you do.” Will remembers a thought that had worried him early. “We’re safe here, right? How long can we stay?” “We are safe here for now, yes.” Hannibal answers. “We should be safe to live here for a couple months, at least. It would be more dangerous to travel now, the FBI does not know if we’ve survived or not, but they should be monitoring all flights carefully. I’m sure they suspect that we’d leave the country as soon as possible if we were alive.” *That makes sense.* “Alright then, yeah, I want to know everything from the beginning. Since we met.” Hannibal takes a sip from his coffee before speaking again. “Alright, though I must admit that I am biased.” Will smiled at that, and he drank his own coffee, enraptured as Hannibal began.

“One of the first things anyone who knows you would mention when talking about you, would be your love of animals. It is something that has stayed completely consistent about you. You've said it is one of the best parts of you. How you knew there is some good in you, no matter what darkness you have.” A fond look crossed Hannibal’s face. “When I met you, you had seven dogs. All strays, all rescues. They were your family, and I quickly learned that one of the best ways to earn your respect was to make nice with your pack.” Will tried to imagine them, and if he strained, he could just barely envision a flash of warmth, rough fur slipping through his fingertips. It was bittersweet. Hannibal continued, and Will was pulled from his thoughts. There was a fond look on his face. “You once told me of a time where you stole a neighbours dog that they were mistreating, your father was furious, but ultimately he let you keep the pup.” Taking another drink, Hannibal changed the subject. “You were a teacher when we met, but you were a cop before that. You liked the peace that teaching gave you, and you were able to ignore the darker parts of yourself easier.” “The darker parts?” Will asks. He’s reminded of when Hannibal explained that they had killed a man together. “Yes. I saw the potential in you from the first moment that I sat across from you in Jack Crawford's office. You were quite deep in denial at that time.” Will was quiet, absorbing the words. Jack Crawford, the name was just as unfamiliar as all the others he had heard. “You were quite

insistent that you were completely fine, and were more than capable of handling yourself." "I'm guessing I wasn't then?"

"You did quite well on your own for a while, but no, you were not. You were suffering from Encephalitis for quite some time, even while doing field work." Hannibal hesitated at that. "Field work? Encephalitis?" Will prompted. "Will," Hannibal was reluctant. "You must know, we had many betrayals and pain between us, for many years. There was much blood and many tears. But it all led to the cliff." He was insistent, trying to convince Will of something he doesn't even understand. "The cliff, when we killed together, it made everything worth it."

"Okay.. and?" Will was curious, and a little scared. Obviously there was a lot to their story that wasn't pleasant. "The complexity of it.. That is why it is important you have your memories to understand it all." "My God Hannibal," Will blurted out. "Just say it already. Nothing is going to change us now, it's too late for that. Besides, if the me with my memories eventually forgives you for it, then I can do it again." Hannibal sighed, holding his cup tightly in both hands. He began to explain, and he spoke far into the afternoon. He spoke for hours, and Will was mesmerized by his words, the horror, pain, and love painting a vivid picture. His sickness, working for the FBI, Jack Crawford, Garrett Jacob Hobbs, Hannibal's manipulation. Prison. Abigail.

They had just gotten to the point where Will had asked Hannibal for his help, pleading from inside his cell. He was playing his own game at that point, and Will couldn't help but be proud of past him. He had figured Hannibal out when nobody had ever done so before, and he had wiggled his way into the other man's psyche, making his own home in his mind, bringing out a deadly obsession. The story brought feelings out, but there was still a major disconnect in Will's brain. It didn't help him actually remember anything, and he had a hard time having any kind of strong reaction to it all. It felt like something out of a storybook, he could look into it with mild interest and emotion, but none of it really felt real. There was some anger though, anger on behalf of the young man that had trusted Hannibal, only to be betrayed. But the anger was fleeting, something of the past.

At this point Hannibal had stopped talking, and he stood up and stretched. "We should take a break. It is past lunchtime, and we must eat." His voice was beginning to sound hoarse. As much as Will wanted to argue, he begrudgingly agreed, standing up and following the other man into the kitchen. While Hannibal cooked, Will couldn't help but stare at the man's hands in fascination. He recalled how they felt when they were clutching onto his own, how soft they were. How such beautiful, gentle hands were capable of the violence in Hannibal's tale, Will almost couldn't believe it. He was sure that Hannibal was aware of his staring, but neither of them spoke. He didn't ask to help, reassured that the man knew what he was doing. He relaxed, confident their conversation would continue after they ate. Will wasn't sure if he was prepared, *but when would I ever be?*

So for now, he just watched the other man's hands as they worked, combining ingredients and mixing together different elements. Beautiful, fascinating, deadly hands.

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Chapter Notes

Okay so before we get into this chapter, I'd like to thank @Ava_McGee because they're comments have been a huge motivator in helping me write, and I owe them because I totally forgot all about infection being a risk, and without them wouldn't have remembered this very important plot point. So thank you to them <3 you're awesome! (Sorry this note sounds like I am accepting an award lol)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lunch is beautiful. Hannibal had mentioned his love of the culinary arts, and his talent was definitely shown. The meal was something simple, sandwiches, but Hannibal has managed to elevate the dish into almost something else. Will sits down at the table, and Hannibal sets a plate in front of each of their spots before sitting down himself. “Toasted french bread with olive oil, fresh mozzarella, spinach, sliced Roma tomatoes, Italian prosciutto, pesto, and garlic.” Will digs in, trying to slow down his eating so it wasn’t impolite. He pauses, wiping his mouth. “It’s delicious, thank you.”

Hannibal damn near swoons at the praise, sitting up visibly straighter, a light blush crossing his face. “Thank you, Will. I’m glad you like it.” The rest of lunch is silent, both of the men enjoying the incredible food. Once they’re done eating, Will joins Hannibal in the kitchen, drying off and putting away the dishes after Hannibal washed them off. Hannibal waits until the dishes are all put away before speaking again. “Perhaps a change of scenery? The weather is nice, I thought we may sit out on the porch.” Will agrees, and they make their way onto the back porch. The air is warm, and Will basks in the sunlight soaking into his skin. There are two comfortable chairs facing the woods in the back. They each get settled, and Will prompts Hannibal to continue his story. “Continue where you left off?” Hannibal shifts uncomfortably, “If you are sure you’d like to continue.” “Of course I’d like to continue, I want to know.”

Hannibal doesn’t argue, and begins telling his tale again. Will is enraptured, and even though he doesn’t have the memories, his imagination is as strong as ever. Hannibal’s words weave bright, violent, and painful images. When they get to Will’s betrayal being brought to light that fateful night in Hannibal's kitchen, Will finds himself unconsciously clutching at his stomach, jaw clenched and tears threatening to fall from his eyes. “Will” the voice sounds far away, attempting and failing to drag Will from his mind. “Will!” he's called again, and this time the voice is accompanied by firm hands grabbing his shoulders. Will is yanked away from the images, and he’s brought back to reality, gasping for breath, his hands leaving red imprints in the skin over his scar. His eyes focus, and he sees Hannibal kneeling in front of

him, both hands on his shoulder and a concerned look on his face. Will collapses forward, his face pressed against Hannibal's neck as his hands come up to clutch the man's shirt. Hannibal lets go of his shoulders, hesitantly wrapping his arms around Will.

Will can feel the other man's heartbeat against his lips, and his strong, steady breaths. He does his best to copy Hannibal's breathing, and he finds his heart rate calming. The others heart is racing, but Will doesn't think much of it. "Sorry." He mumbles the word, distracted by how warm Hannibal's skin feels against his.

"Don't be sorry, Will. To be honest I was quite surprised by how well you were taking everything. I'm sorry for not realizing quicker that you needed a break. You do not need to apologize." "Don't I?" Will answers. Hannibal pauses at that, recognizing the double meaning. "No, you don't. That was a long time ago, and we've both paid for our respective betrayals ten times over. I've moved on, and so have you." Will nods, and he lets out a deep breath before slowly pulling away from the man. Hannibal still looks concerned, but he has a hesitant, hopefully look in his eyes. "Did you remember?" Will shakes his head, "No, but I *saw.* I understood." A flash of disappointment crosses Hannibal's face, but he's quick to cover it up. "Can you continue?" It's Hannibal's turn to shake his head, "We should be done for tonight. I believe we both need a break. You may ask any questions you have, I'm just done telling the story until tomorrow." Will nods, scrubbing his face in his hands and trying to orient himself better. Hannibal gets up, a grimace on his face as his body protests. "Let us go inside, I am in the mood to sketch, and there are plenty of things for you to do as well." Will stands up and follows him inside. As they walk, Will notices the flush to Hannibal's skin, and the sheen of sweat glinting off him. Something clicks, and Will remembers how hot Hannibal's skin was against his lips. *Too hot.*

He grabs Hannibal's arm, bringing them both to a stop. "Will, what-" the question is cut off as Will presses his cheek against Hannibal's. He was right, the man's skin is burning hot. He closes his eyes, swallowing back the fear that creeps up. Pulling away, he tries to hold Hannibal's eye contact. The other man, however, refuses. "Why didn't you say something Hannibal?" "I'm fine." "No, you're not. Let me see it." Hannibal shakes his head, and Will sighs. He grabs onto a charcoal gray sweater, lifting it up. Hannibal briefly attempts to push his hands away, and Will has to stop himself from yelling. "Let me look, Hannibal. I swear to God." He looks, and he almost wishes he didn't.

The bullet wound is a bright, shiny red, and boiling hot to the touch. There are red streaks spreading across his abdomen, yellowing around the edges. *Blood poisoning. Sepsis.* "Hannibal.." He sounds like he's begging. "I'm fine, Will." Hannibal repeats. Will snaps, his voice raising in desperation. "No you're not! Stop saying that! My God Hannibal, why didn't you say something?"

“I did not think the issue was very pressing.” *At least he sounds fucking ashamed* Will thinks. “Not pressing? Hannibal this is sepsis! You’re a Doctor for God's sake, you know how bad this is.” Will glares at him, dropping the other man's shirt and running his hands through his hair. “We have stuff to treat it, right?” He searches the other man's face, desperate for some kind of reassurance. “Right?” Hannibal shakes his head, and Will feels like the floors disappeared right from under him. He takes a few deep breaths and rubs his eyes against the palms of his hands so hard he can see stars. “Alright, alright. Then we just need to get something. We can do that, right? It’ll be fine.” Hannibal stays silent, his face solemn. Will continues to ramble. “Okay, we’ll need antibiotics, and you’ve got to stay hydrated, so you might need an IV.” He stops and grabs Hannibal’s face between his hands, “Look at me Hannibal.” Slowly, cinnamon eyes reach his own. “You’re the doctor. I need your help.” They stare at each other for what feels like forever before Hannibal gives a small, slow nod.

Will tries to smile, but it comes out looking like a grimace. “Good, okay, alright. So we don’t have the medication we need, so we’re going to have to steal it. Obviously I’m not opposed to breaking and entering, you’ll just have to tell me what we need. We can’t go to a hospital though, they’d have too much security.” An idea comes to mind, a lightbulb moment. “A vet clinic would probably have a bunch of different medications.” Hope begins to return, and Will finds the pit in his stomach lessening. “Is there a vet somewhere near here?” Hannibal nods. “Okay, well, do you have a map?” “In the car.” Is Hannibal's short response.

Will finds himself sprinting to the car, flinging open the door and digging through the compartments until he can run back inside, map victoriously held in hand. He grabs a pen, and then spreads it out on the kitchen table. Hannibal is quiet and reserved as he makes his way into the kitchen and next to Will. His face is blank and his tone is flat as he explains the easiest way to the nearest vet office, and as he writes Will a list of all the supplies they will need. Will listens intently, doing his best to commit all the information to memory as quickly as possible. “Okay, I got it. I’m going right now, wait for me, okay?” “Yes Will” is all the answer he gets. *God, these mood swings are giving me whiplash* Will thinks, frustratedly.

Once everything is gathered up, Will pauses from his frantic activity and turns to face Hannibal. Aside from the flush caused by his fever, Hannibal looks solemn, and Will is suddenly struck by the fear that Hannibal won’t be there when he gets back. Hannibal doesn’t strike Will as someone who is suicidal, even with his self imposed solitude for those few days. But you don’t have to be actively trying to kill yourself to be suicidal, sometimes that just means you aren’t actively trying to live.

“Hey…” his soft tone causes those warm, brown eyes to look up. Will brings both hands up to gently hold the man's face between them. Before he can talk himself out of it, he brushes

their lips against each other in the softest kiss he can manage. When he pulls away, Hannibal looks more alive. “Be here when I get back, okay?” Hannibal's eyes are warm as he answers. “Of course. Where else would I go?” Will smiles at that, and then turns away and makes his way to the car. As he starts the car to leave, he can’t help but brush his fingertips against his lips.

Chapter End Notes

Okay my bad, short chapter and it is late, it is what it is though.

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Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The drive to the vet office seemed like it was taking forever. Will was impatiently tapping his fingers against the steering wheel the whole way there, and fighting the urge to speed. Getting pulled over would be stupid, and the last thing he needed, so he clenched his jaw and drove at what seemed like a snail's pace the whole way there. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't seem to slow his racing heart. *God, all I'm doing is driving!*

Eventually, he pulled up to the quiet, dark building, and took a few deep breaths. Reaching over to the passenger seat, he grabs the ski mask he had thrown in the car, a flashlight, a backpack, and the metal lock picking instruments. *Of course Hannibal has lock picking stuff* he thinks with a flash of endearment. Pulling the ski mask over his head, he steps out into the dark and approaches the door.

Picking the lock was laughably easy, and was something he obviously had plenty of previous experience doing. He pauses once he got in, waiting and listening for an alarm to be set off, but it remains silent. They're in a pretty rural area, and there probably aren't many break-ins. He turns the flashlight on and makes his way into the back of the building, and is able to find where they keep the medication fairly quickly. A few were locked in a fridge, but that was just as easy to open as the front door was. Hannibal had written down a few medications, Ceftriaxone, which he can't find, and Cefepime and Vancomycin, among a few others, that he is thankfully able to find with some digging. He's able to gather the needed supplies for starting IV fluids as well, so he throws that in his backpack along with the medication. His hands shake violently as he gathers everything he needs, and he ends up dropping a couple of the bottles. "Shit" he whispers, kneeling down on the floor and looking around. It takes him a whole five minutes to find what he had dropped, but once he gets it put away with the rest of the stuff, he is finally done. There was no point in trying to cover up the break-in, so he doesn't waste time trying to clean up or lock the doors once he was out. He sprints back to the car, throwing the backpack in the passenger seat, and then starts the car and peels out of the driveway. He only remembers his mask after he has started driving away, so he pulls it off one handed while he drives, shaking out his curls to stop them from sticking to his sweating face.

The adrenaline rush is intense, and Will has to grip the steering wheel tightly so he won't accidentally let go with all his shaking. "Holy fuck… I did it. I just did that." The words bring a smile to his face, and he starts to laugh. He laughs so hard tears are streaming down his cheeks and he starts to hiccup because he can't catch his breath. He feels alive. Sure, all he had done was break into an empty building, but considering that he doesn't have any memories, that was the most intense thing he can remember ever doing.

The drive home is a stark contrast to the drive there, time seems to fly by. He is anxious to be reunited with Hannibal, and get his health under control. He still can't for the life of him figure out why Hannibal had stayed silent, surely he was in a lot of pain, and it would've

been easier to treat if they had addressed it sooner. Will's laughing dries up after a few minutes, and he finds his mood darkening by his racing thoughts. He is struggling to make sense of Hannibal's actions, so he starts going over all their interactions one by one as he drives. It is ultimately Hannibal's reluctance for Will to leave that gives him away, his face as Will gathered up supplies for the brief trip almost flipping a switch in Will's mind, and suddenly it all makes sense. *Hannibal is scared of me leaving.* The realization makes Will's heart break just a bit, and while he may not remember much about Hannibal, something tells him that the other man wasn't used to fear. Hannibal's mood had been erratic since they had arrived at the cabin, and the back and forth was draining. *That's really out of character for him*, Will wasn't sure how he knew, but he did. *I should've realized he was sick earlier*. Will wasn't a doctor, but if he had to guess, the infection had amplified whatever emotions Hannibal was struggling with already, leading to this more erratic behaviour. He had spent those few days alone in his room, and there was no way Will could've known he was sick, but a stab of guilt seemed to push all the breath out of his lungs.

I'll do better now, I know what I'm looking for, Will promises himself. They only have each other, and they will need to talk to each other better. Will knows enough of their story from what Hannibal had gone over so far, that he knows they have the ability to communicate. The thought was reassuring, and he repeats it over and over again in his mind until he pulls back up to the cabin. All seems just as he left it, the lights on and the door unlocked.

"Hannibal! I'm back, I got everything I could." He calls out as he opens the front door and makes his way in clutching the backpack and lifesaving medication against his chest. It seems like Hannibal hadn't moved from the place he was when Will left, sitting on the couch with his head in his hands. He does look up as Will's voice rings through the house, relief evident on his face as he visibly relaxes. He bolts to his feet, balance swaying ever so slightly. "You came back."

"Of course I did, I promised I would." Hannibal smiles at that, a real smile, and Will can't help but grin back. Will makes his way across the living room and takes a seat next to Hannibal, setting the backpack on the coffee table in front of them. He unzips it and starts pulling everything out as he speaks. "I got almost everything you asked for, I couldn't find one of the antibiotics though. Ceftriaxone?" "That's fine, you did well Will. What you got should work." Will nods, relieved. "Okay good." He watches Hannibal inspect the medication, making note of the dosages and amount in each bottle. "Will you need my help with anything?" Hannibal shakes his head, "I don't believe so. However, I shall make a chart of what medications I will need when, and leave it out for both of us to check. I believe my mind is clear enough to do it myself, but I will make the list as a precaution."

"That's a good idea. If you do need my help, just say something, okay?" "Of course." Is the response Will gets. Hannibal looks to be in a better mood already, free of the worry that weighed heavily on him about Will running off. Will stays silent after that, just watching as Hannibal takes his first round of antibiotics and then writes out his medication schedule in his neat, beautiful calligraphy. Hannibal then sets up an IV drip for himself, grabbing a book to read while he sits. Will doesn't take his eyes off the other man, wringing his hands and remaining seated.

Once Hannibal is comfortably situated back on the couch, IV in place this time, he finally looks back at Will. Something in Will's gaze must speak, because Hannibal feels the need to break their silence. "I will be fine, with plenty of fluids, medication, and rest. The infection should go away easily." Will nods, eyes dark. Hannibal gives a small sigh, before he reaches out and takes Will's hands in his own. At this, Will breaks eye contact and brings his gaze down to their hands. Hannibal is quiet as he gives Will the space to take his time to speak. Will turns his hands over to grasp the other man's tightly, and his words finally come as they both stare at their intertwined fingers. "Something like this can't happen again, Hannibal. I need you. I understand you're worried about me leaving or having a bad reaction, I get it, okay? But I'm not leaving. I may not remember everything, but I understand enough to know that we need each other, that we can't survive separation. I will fight to get my memories back, and we can come up with a plan. But I can't have you checking out or giving up. And I need you to trust me." He takes a breath before continuing. "We obviously don't have the best track record with honesty and trust, but we've got to do better now. I trust you, okay? I'm giving you my trust, and I'm promising to do my best to be honest, too. But you've got to give me the same, okay? Promise me."

When Will looks up, Hannibal's eyes are shining as he nods. "You are correct, we have both betrayed and hurt each other beyond measure in our past, and old habits are admittedly hard to break. But you're right, we must do better. We must look to the future, and our best to change. I cannot promise that I won't make mistakes, but I promise to do my best to trust you, and be honest as well."

Will unwraps his hands from Hannibal's, and reaches up to cup his face. Their faces are so close, they're breathing shared air. Hannibal's nose just barely bumps into Will's, the touch giving both men goosebumps. Will's voice is soft, "We've got this. Together." Hannibal's reply is just as quiet. "Together." The words are followed by a soft press of lips, Will's chapped, warm mouth meeting Hannibal's smooth, even warmer one. Will's eyes slip close, and Hannibal does the same as the kiss deepens. The kiss becomes less gentle and more demanding, with one of Hannibal's hands sliding around Will's neck and tangling itself in his curls, while the other slowly reaches under his shirt. Hannibal's hand ghosts over the scar on Will's stomach, the smile he had given him all those years ago. Will doesn't pull away, if anything he leans closer. A quiet moan leaves his mouth as Hannibal's fingers brush against the scar, and he brushes his own hands through the other man's hair.

They are forced to pull away to breath, both men gasping, and they stay tangled together as they both catch their breath. They both end up laying down on the couch, it's big enough for them to be next to each other, and they refuse to let go. Will's face is pressed against Hannibal's neck, and he presses soft kisses to the warm, sweaty skin there. Hannibal is playing with Will's chocolate curls, wrapping them around his fingers and combing through them. Their heartbeats slow, and eventually match each other.

"I've dreamed of this moment." Hannibal says suddenly. "Even with all my imagination, I couldn't have ever come up with something that feels so.. Right." "It does, doesn't it?" Will responds. "It's like we were made for each other." Will yawns, and Hannibal presses a kiss against his head. "I believe we were."

The emotion and adrenaline is finally catching up to them, and Will can’t bring himself to move as he feels himself falling asleep. He manages to catch one word before he loses consequences, whispered endearingly into the air by his ear.

“Mylimasis”

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so I Googled what medications people take for sepsis, and so I went based on that, I'm always open to corrections by people who know better. I am halfway done with chapter 7 and will have that out tomorrow :)

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Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will groans, stretching out his arms as he wakes up. As he slowly regains consciousness, he becomes aware that he's still laying on the living room couch. The sun is up, streaming through the windows and signaling that it's afternoon. He's still fully dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, but someone, Hannibal, had tucked a blanket in over him, and slid a pillow under his head. *Hannibal, where is Hannibal?* The man is missing from where Will last remembers him, their bodies pressed together, laying on the couch. Hannibal had obviously gotten up at some point, making sure Will was comfortable before leaving. *I'm surprised I didn't wake up,* Will thinks. *I guess I was really tired from all of last night's events.*

Last night. Will's memories of the night before come flooding back, and he can't help the burning heat that floods his face. They had kissed, or more like made out, he corrects himself. He slips one hand under his shirt, pressing his fingers against the scar there. He doesn't remember how he got it, but from the way Hannibal had possessively run his hands across it, he's guessing that the other man had a hand in making it. Will yawns, and brings both of his hands up to run his eyes. He feels anxiety creep up as he sits up and stretches his limbs. His shoulder pops and he groans, rubbing the tight muscles as he gets up and makes his way into the kitchen.

Hannibal is sitting at the kitchen table, sipping a cup of coffee as he reads. Will does a double take as he's looking at the other man, *Hannibal's wearing reading glasses.* They are classy, plain frames, but they suit the man's aristocratic face, making him appear more mature, older. He still looks fairly haggard, but his posture is straighter. Hannibal looks up from his book, and Will ducks his head, embarrassed to be caught staring. "Good afternoon, Will." Will clears his throat, and as he looks back at the man he can just barely make out a faint smirk pulling at his lips. "Uh, hey." He scratches the back of his neck awkwardly. Hannibal speaks again, "There is lunch in the fridge for you, just put it in the oven to warm up."

Will takes that as his cue to make his way into the kitchen, opening the fridge and taking out the covered plate. "Thanks, I appreciate it." "It is no problem," is Hannibal's reply. "Does it have to be in the oven, or will the microwave work?" Will says it with a teasing tone of voice, and he turns to see a faint grimace cross Hannibal's face. "I must insist on using the oven, although I can't stop you from doing what you please." "I'm kidding, Hannibal," Will assures him, as he turns the oven on to warm up. "I knew that." "Uh huh, sure." Hannibal glares back at Will, before turning back to his book and coffee. They share a comfortable silence as Will warms his food, before taking his plate and sitting across from Hannibal. The food is amazing, as always, and Will eats quickly. "It's great, thank you." "I would've liked to

give it to you fresh, but I did not want to wake you. You needed sleep." "Yeah," Will grimaces, rubbing his shoulder again as he feels the muscles pinch. "I was more tired than I thought." Hannibal closes his book, making note of the page number and then taking off his glasses. He watches Will massage the muscle, "You are lucky to have the movement you do in that shoulder, I am glad it has healed well enough, though I'm surprised it doesn't affect you more." "Yeah?" Will replies. "I mean obviously it got hurt in the fight we had, but I'm guessing I had some other injuries too?"

Hannibal nods as he stands up, walking up behind Will and removing his hand from his shoulder. He replaces it with his own, and starts to massage the tight muscles. Will hisses, air whistling between his teeth as he takes a sharp breath from the initial pain. "Try to relax," Hannibal advises, before he continues the previous topic. "You mentioned that you had been stabbed when you were working in law enforcement in your earlier years, and you were shot twice in the same shoulder." He pauses. "It really is miraculous you have as much use as you do. I highly doubt you were consistent with any kind of physical therapy."

The massage starts to feel amazing, the pain melting away as Will relaxes into his chair. "Who shot me?" Hannibal is quiet for a moment before answering. "Jack Crawford did once, I'm sure you remember when I spoke of him. Chiyoh was the other." Will laughs at that, "I had a feeling that she didn't like me very much. I can't say I'm too surprised." Hannibal lets out a small chuckle as well, "Chiyoh is very protective of me. She recognizes your ability to hurt me, and it worries her. Though I have a feeling that at this point, she understands our bond, as much as is possible for one who is not in either of our minds." Hannibal finishes the massage and pulls away, "Now, clear your plate, and if you feel up to it I was thinking I shall continue our story from where I last left off." Will nods, standing and following Hannibal's instructions, washing and putting away his dishes. While Will is cleaning up, he catches Hannibal swallowing an array of brightly coloured pills, drinking them down with the rest of his coffee.

Once all the dishes are washed, coffee cup included, the two men make their way onto the back porch, with Hannibal stopping to grab two blankets on their way. They sit side by side in their respective chairs, and Hannibal hands Will a blanket to drape over his lap. It is early afternoon, and while the sun is shining, there is a sharp breeze in the air. Once they have each made themselves comfortable, Hannibal begins their story again. Starting right where they left off in Hannibal's kitchen in Baltimore, and going on from there. Hannibal speaks in a soothing tone, his words flowing together without stuttering or stopping. Will is fascinated just listening to him speak, the words washing over him. His memories stubbornly refuse to return, but there are echoes of emotions that come and go, whispers of the past.

Will tries to imagine Abigail as Hannibal talks about her, but he feels like he fails. The ghost of a girl he once loved, he grieves the fact that he can't properly grieve her. *God knows she*

deserves to be remembered. There are gaps in the story, places Will had gone alone. That part hurts the worst, knowing there are so many memories and experiences that he might never get back, things that made Will Graham, Will Graham. Things Hannibal couldn't even tell him.

When Hannibal goes over their experience in Italy, and arrives at their reunion in front of the Primavera, he finally stops and clears his throat. "I am going to get some water and perhaps some coffee, would you like some as well?" Will recognizes the much needed break and responds. "Sure, thanks." The sun had gone down some, signaling the change in daytime. They were approaching late afternoon, and they had been talking for hours. *I wonder if Hannibal will lose his voice,* Will thinks amusedly. As he waits for Hannibal to return, he takes a moment to stand up and stretch. He leans against the patio railing and watches the birds flutter from tree to tree. Hannibal was right, that had a lot of history. Even that's an understatement. He tries to compare himself to the Will that Hannibal describes, and finds he struggles. It's not that he can't imagine himself doing those things, if anything, that comes easily. There just seem to be so many missing pieces, parts of his identity that are essential to who he is that have been stripped of him. *I don't even know my favourite colour.*

It's heart wrenching to know that he's not the only one missing Will Graham, Hannibal is too. He had been serious when he told Hannibal not to mourn someone who was still alive, but there was a lot missing. He can imagine himself moving on with Hannibal, staying together and eventually fleeing the country, finding someplace they can be together, and be free. But if he doesn't regain his memories there will always be something missing, there will always be a space between them, a gap they couldn't fill. He needs to remember, for both of them. Will doubts that Hannibal would leave him, even if he didn't remember, he'd suffer in silence, and welcome Will with both arms open. *How depressing.*

Will is brought out of his dreary thoughts by Hannibal's return. He's handed a warm cup of coffee and breaths in the steam. "Thanks," he mumbles. Hannibal's nods, and they each take a moment to drink. Will hesitates, gathering up the courage to speak. "I still don't remember anything. I *need* to remember." Hannibal glances at him, but Will keeps his gaze pointed firmly ahead. "Even with all that we know about the brain, there is so much left unknown as well. You might just need time, or, there is a chance you may never regain those memories. We can't know. You need to prepare yourself for the possibility that all you may have is the things I tell you." Will grips his cup tightly between his hands, the heat grounding him. He takes a deep breath before responding. "I can feel shadows lingering at the edge of my mind. Fighting to be recognized. I just need a push.. I don't know what kind, but something to force the blankness away." Hannibal is quiet at that, obviously deep in thought. The birds are quieter, but a few brave ones continue their songs, the upbeat melodies breaking the silence.

“There have been cases where amnesia is reversed when the person suffering from it is faced with physical reminders of the things they had forgotten. It is not a guarantee though, and it would be incredibly risky.” Will absorbs the words, making sense of them. “You mean like.. Go back to Baltimore? To Italy? Louisiana?” Hannibal nods, “As I said, incredibly dangerous. But there is a chance that it could be the push you need.” Thoughts swirl around in Will’s mind as he weighs the risks and benefits, the pros and cons.

“Let’s do it.”

Chapter End Notes

So, I couldn't remember which shoulder Jack shot when he shot Will, or even if it was exactly on his shoulder. But I rewatched the scene a bunch of times and still could not tell (the show is SO dark and I have very bad eyesight) I couldn't really find any clarification either, so I just decided lol. Call it.. taking creative liberty

*

Chapter Notes

Hey guys!!! Sorry this chapter took literally forever, but I hope you enjoy <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was easy to say they were going to take a so-called trip down memory lane, but the practicalities were difficult to arrange. They were technically criminals on the run, after all. Hannibal spent quite a bit of time on his iPad, figuring out the safest routes they could take, arranging places they could stay, and the best ways to remain undetectable. Will didn't want to get in the way, and ended up laying on the couch, amusing himself with the stack of crossword puzzles Hannibal had stocked in a cabinet.

"Here's one for you, fifteen letters, adjective. Physically beautiful; comely." Will calls across the room to Hannibal, who is seated at the dining room table. Hannibal doesn't even pause as he scrolls through something on his iPad, his eyes never leaving the screen. "William."

Will's face feels like it's on fire as he stops and looks up at Hannibal. "Haha, very funny. Come on, I can't figure it out." Hannibal shrugs, a faint smirk pulling at his mouth. "I have all my faith in you." Will sighs loudly in response, and moves onto the next word. It takes him an hour to finish the rest of the puzzle, and he spends the next twenty minutes staring at the empty space in frustration. He mentally shifts though his vocabulary, over and over again, before he gets it. He quickly writes it down, pencil almost tearing through the paper in his rush. He throws it to the floor and lets out a sigh of relief. Hannibal glances up, briefly peering at Will through the corner of his eye, glasses still perched on his nose. "I believe that is your way of saying you have succeeded in figuring it out?" Will flings an arm across his face, "Obviously. God, that took forever." "And what was it?" Hannibal questions. Will uncovers his face just to shoot Hannibal a glare. "Pulchritudinous." That tiny, barely visible smirk returns to Hannibal's face. "Well done." Hannibal congratulates him, his voice dead serious and seemingly genuine. If Will didn't know any better, he would've thought he meant it. "Asshole." He waits a few more minutes before interrupting Hannibal again. "You've been on that stupid iPad forever, are you almost close to being done?" Hannibal grimaces, just a brief downturn of his lips and squinting of his eyes. On anyone else it would be unnoticeable, but on Hannibal, it might as well have been a giant neon lit sign. "We are in a bad position to consider traveling. The FBI has officially declared us dead, but our dear friend Jack Crawford will not rest until he sees our bodies first hand. I doubt he agrees with the FBI. He'll be out there looking." Hannibal adjusts his glasses briefly. "And with our injuries, we will need more time, even though we are both healing well as of now."

Will rubs his eyes, his knuckles pressing against the sockets so hard he sees stare. He yawns, gaining a fond look from the other man. “Sleep, mylimasis. I will wake you if you are needed.” Will nods slowly, his eyes already closing on their own accord. The couch is comfortable, and the warm sun is shining through the windows, giving them a rare break from the rain. Sleep claimed Will easily, and he slipped into the warm darkness.

The visions are translucent, slipping through his fingers like silk. Whispers he can just barely catch. Memories float around him like butterflies, goading him to catch them. They are all too fast for him, weaving away from him. Finally, one lands on his shoulder. Cupping it in his hand, the memories reflect back to him, bouncing off the butterflies wings. A name, a feeling of comfort. Warmth. Trustworthy black eyes and soft brown hair. Will smiles, breathing in the comforting image. Those black eyes blink up at him once, twice, and then the butterfly takes off again. Will frowns. “Wait!” He calls out, but the memory evaporates. He clings to what he can, sadness taking over. Those black eyes don't leave him though, and he tightly hugs the memory to his chest. He will not lose this one.

Will is awoken by a gentle hand on his shoulder, and a soft, accented voice calling his name. He opens his eyes, blinking slowly as he adjusts to his surroundings. It's dark outside, and Hannibal is sitting on the edge of the couch, gently shaking Will awake and calling his name. “There you are.” The man smiles as Will wakes up. Will grabs onto Hannibal’s hand, still frantically clinging to the memory in his mind.

“Winston.” The word is rushed, and Will tightly holds onto Hannibal’s hand, his nails digging into the soft skin and his eyes pleading. *Please let me remember something. Please.*

Hannibal’s face blanks, his eyes unreadable. Will reaches up to grasp Hannibal’s face in his hands. “Please.” He begs. Slowly, Hannibal's expression melts. He grasps Will’s face in his hands in return, a smile breaking out across his face. The kiss that follows is sloppy, excitement and joy fueled. When they finally pull away from each other, Hannibal lets out a small, genuine laugh. “Of course you would remember your dogs first. I would expect nothing less of you.”

Will releases his own laugh, his eyes wet with tears. “This is a good sign, right? They aren’t completely gone, should I be able to get them back?” Hannibal nods in response. “There is no guarantee, but this is a good sign, yes. There is hope Will. Hope that you shall return to me fully.” Another brief kiss is pressed against Will’s lips, and then they slowly start to untangle

themselves from each other. “Come,” Hannibal says. “I want to show you the plans I have made so far.”

Will nods, stretching his arms above his head as he stands up. His shoulder pulls painfully, but he can tell there has been some improvement.

Will makes his way over to the dining room table, glancing over the maps and notebooks Hannibal has neatly spread across the surface. He pulls a chair next to Hannibal’s, and he is directed to look at the computer and iPad surfaces. Hannibal lets him look over the different sights and notes, hotels booked discreetly, ideal roads to take for them to cross state lines undetected.

“We will start with Louisiana, where you were born and raised. Then we shall move onto New Orleans, where you spent your time as a cop.” Hannibal pauses after that, seemingly reluctant to explain the next part of the plan. Will looks over at him, silently asking him to continue.

“The next stop would be Baltimore and Virginia, where you taught at and joined the FBI. Where your old home in Wolf Trap sits. Where we met.”

‘Where we met…’ Hannibal’s eyes twinkle at that, his face fond. “Yes, where we met. That fateful day in Jack Crawford's office. Where the universe set into motion a great reckoning. Where you experienced your becoming.” Will nods, anxiety wrapping itself around him. “Won’t it be even more dangerous? Is Jack still there?” His eyes meet Hannibal's, desperate to let his worries be known and acknowledged. “I don’t want you to go to prison. I don’t want to go to prison.”

"We will be exceedingly careful, and take no risks outside of what we must. Jack Crawford still owns a home there, but he has been traveling the country and the world looking for us. The chance of him being there at the same time as us is slim to none. He would not expect us to go back there, we'll be fine. And in the off chance that something does happen, your memory loss should be a well enough defense. With the right lawyer, you could probably avoid any prison time at all."

"What about you?" Will asks. "I don't want to lose you." Hannibal's voice shines with love and affection as he replies. "Mi amor, there is nothing in this world that could keep me from

you. I have enough resources and knowledge that I am fully confident in my ability to escape prison, and Jack Crawford's grasp, and find my way to you. I promise. Trust me."

Will lets out a small breath. The anxiety isn't gone, but he trusts Hannibal. He repeats the mans words in his head, trying to reassure himself.

Hannibal’s hand comes up and grasps Will's shoulder, a reassuring and comforting gesture. Will squeezes his eyes shut, a flash of a memory associated with the action. A rainy sky he watches out of a window. The warmth of a fireplace penetrating through his bones. A masculine, deep cologne filling his senses. A voice, Hannibal's voice, seeming to speak underwater. “We are her fathers now.”

Will gasps, torn back into the present. Hannibal has laid Will’s head against his chest, his own breathing deep, deliberately deep, so that Will can subconsciously copy him. The position is awkward with the way they’re sitting at the table, but it is comforting. Will grasps Hannibal’s shift tightly in his fists.

“Are you back with me, mylimasis?”

Will nods, slowly letting go of Hannibal's shirt and sitting back up straight. He keeps his head bowed though, a dark brush spread across his face. “Sorry.. I didn’t mean to do that.” He peeks up, just a brief glance to see the expression on Hannibal’s face. Hannibal sends him a look of reassurance, mild hope shimmering in his eyes that he’s not able to completely conceal. “I take it you remembered something?” Will nods, rubbing his eyes again, trying to reorient himself. “We are her fathers now.” He repeats.

Hannibal is quiet after that, and once Will can bring himself to fully lift his head and face the other man, he takes in Hannibal somber expression. Hannibal nods, “Good, it seems repetitive gestures bring back the associated memories you have with them. That makes me sure that our plan to bring you face to face with significant places will allow your mind to release its hold on your memories.” Will feels a lump in his throat that he has trouble swallowing around. Hannibal stands, gathering up his papers and electronics. “It is late, I know you took a nap, but you still need plenty of rest. We can go over the rest of the plan and locations in the morning.

Tears sting Will’s eyes, upset with himself for ruining the good mood. He follows Hannibal’s action, standing up and moving the chair back to its rightful place. It screeches across the floor, the noise deafening in the near silent room. As he’s turning to make his way back to his room, Hannibal catches his arm. “Two recovered memories in one day is incredible progress. This is a good thing, Will.” Will stays silent for another beat, before he manages to choke out the words he’s been thinking. “You were talking about Abigail, weren't you?”

Hannibal gives a stiff nod, “I have explained the basics of what occurred with you, but there are some things you must remember for yourself.”

The conversation is left at that, and both men make their ways into their separate rooms. As Will is getting ready for bed, the look on Hannibal’s face when Abigail is mentioned haunts him. As he stares at the ceiling that night, trying to sleep, he comes to a conclusion.

Hannibal must have truly loved her.

Chapter End Notes

I am SO sorry this chapter took forever. I got a new job and have been working nonstop, and when I'm not working, I have 0 motivation to do ANYTHING. I work nightshifts in healthcare, so I am always always tired. That's just about it, I don't have a big excuse or anything. I am hoping to get back into writing, I have a huge two and a half week road trip coming up, so I should have plenty of time to read a bunch of books and write a bunch of chapters. Thank you so much for being patient with me and for all the support, y'all are absolutely amazing.

Please excuse any typos or mistakes, I am not professional writer by any means, and while I try to proofread a bunch of times but I don't have a beta, so it is what it is.

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